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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parents' occupational aspirations for their children and selected socio-demographic characteristics of the parents. In addition, the data from this study made it possible to examine those relationships for congruency of the parents' own 1948 aspirations and 1967 attainments, that is, congruency of parents' own occupational aspirations for their eldest child. Data were collected from 157 high school seniors in 1948. Those respondents were interviewed again in 1956 and a third interview was conducted in 1967. This report is limited to the 94 respondents who in 1967 had become parents and had expressed occupational aspirations for their eldest child. Findings indicated that the parents' achievements of their own aspirations relative to residence, migration, performance, and educational attainment between 1948 and 1967 were not related to their occupational aspirations for their children. (CH)

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RELATIONSHIP OF SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND PARENTAL OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

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Relationship of Selected Socio-demographic Characteristics and Parental Occupational Aspirations for Their Children*

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Data from a longitudinal study have been used to examine the relationship between parents' occupational aspirations for their children and selected socio-demographic characteristics of the parents. In addition, the longitudinal data made it possible to examine these relationships for "congruency" of parents' own 1948 aspirations and 1967 attainments. That is, congruency of parents' own aspirations-attainments concerning occupation, education, residence and migration intentions were examined to see if differences existed in parents' occupational aspirations for their eldest child. Data were collected from 157 high school seniors in 1948. These respondents were interviewed again in 1956 (data not presented in this paper) and for the third time in 1967. This paper is limited to the 94 respondents who (in 1967) had become parents and had expressed occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Findings presented here do not support some theoretical generalizations and field data presented in other studies. The parents' achievements of their own aspirations (congruency) relative to residence, migration performance and educational attainment between 1948 and 1967 were not related to their occupational aspirations for their children.

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Introduction

The process by which youth choose their education or occupation has been a topic of social research for many years. Some writers theorize that the family is one of the most important factors in the socialization of the child. Hence, the family should be one of the most important influences in a youth's occupational decision-making. Various procedures have been used to relate these occupational decisions to selected socio-demographic factors.

Implicit in these family-oriented studies is the assumption that youth are affected by the socializing influence of the family, and further, that a youth's occupational aspiration is related to his current place of residence and to his parents' migration, occupation and education.

Data collected in this study allow the opportunity to examine the relationship between selected socio-demographic characteristics of parents and in turn the parents' occupational aspirations for their children. Further, it was possible to examine whether the parents' attainment of their own aspirations was related to their aspirations for their children now that they had become parents. This attainment has been labeled "congruency" and is discussed in the methods section.

The literature further suggests a social class orientation by specifying that semi-skilled and unskilled parents can give general level responses about their aspirations for their children.[1] But when probed beyond the general level, many parents cannot respond. For example, many parents reply that they want their children to have "better" occupations than they (the parents) have, but are undecided when asked what "better" occupations they would prefer. This position has been found among working-class parents and has been assumed for parents who have resided on the

farm for their lifetime.[2] Other researchers have demonstrated that parents closer to the professions and managerial occupations have more knowledge of what "better" type of work they would like to see their children enter.[3] The position has been taken that parents who have migrated have been "exposed" to a range of occupations and that those who have always resided in a rural setting lack role models and knowledge about urban occupations from which to make judgments about which occupations their children should enter.[4]

In summary, sociologists and psychologists have attempted to build theory and conduct field tests on the premise that the family is a major influence on the occupational-educational decisions of youth and that socio-demographic factors of the parents are associated with the differences in occupations aspired to for their children. To that end we have attempted to examine the relationship between family (parents) factors and occupational aspirations for their children. Hence, this unique examination of the data relative to the socio-demographic characteristics of the parents at the time of the last study (1967) and whether or not the parents had attained their own desired (1948) aspirations is believed to be a contribution to the literature in occupational aspirations.

Methods

Data from a 20-year longitudinal study are the basis of this study. In 1948 a group of high school seniors were interviewed. This same group of 1948 high school seniors was interviewed again in 1967. The two interviews over approximately a 20-year period provided data for the high school seniors' original aspirations relative to migration, education, occupation and whether or not they intended to maintain a farm or nonfarm

residence. Over this 20-year period, many of the 1948 respondents became parents themselves, and this paper examines their occupational aspirations for their eldest child determined during the 1967 interview. Hence, the data allow us to make an examination of the socio-demographic characteristics of a group of individuals who later became parents and to relate their aspirations and achievements to the occupational aspirations held for their children. Most research relating characteristics of the parents to occupational aspirations for their children has relied on recall data or on the present status of the parent. Few studies have the advantage of longitudinal data collected before the respondents actually became parents.

The longitudinal nature of the study allows us to relate the parents' goals they aspired to in 1948 relative to the socio-demographic variables. Hence, this study may be considered a dependent-independent variable examination, with occupational aspirations for the eldest child as the dependent variable. The four independent variables were measures of 1948 aspirations-1967 attainments regarding type of residence (farm-nonfarm), migration intention-migration performance, occupational aspiration-occupational attainment, and educational aspiration-educational attainment.

A one-way analysis of variance was used as the major test of relationships between the dependent variable, occupational aspirations for children, and the four socio-demographic characteristics.[5] If the parents had attained their 1948 aspirations they were referred to as "congruent". Chi-square tests were used to test for differences between three of the four variables and the status ranking of parents' occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Occupational aspirations were measured by a modified North-Hatt scale, used both in the parents' occupational status and in the occupational aspiration for their eldest child.[6] Parents' residence was dichotomized into farm-nonfarm, the major consideration being whether or not farming was an occupation. The standard census classification of rural-urban residence was not used in this study. Migration was defined as a move from the home community in 1948; distance was not considered. Educational attainment was dichotomized into those who had received post-high school training and those who had completed high school only. Since all respondents were high school seniors at the time of the original study, a high school education was the minimal educational attainment in this study. Since our study focuses on those individuals who responded in 1948 who now have become parents, the original sample of 157 was reduced to 94 parents who had children and who gave an occupational aspiration for their eldest child. Occupational aspirations in the "congruency" tests (X^2) were dichotomized at the mean score for the sample. North-Hatt scores of 76 or more were placed in the "high" category, those 75 or lower were assigned to the "low" aspirations category.

Findings

Residence The background and rationale for an examination of parents' residence and occupational aspirations for their children were suggested in the introduction where it was shown that many farm parents do not have an occupational aspiration for their children, less than half the farm parents wish their children to farm[7] and that parents' residence often is related to occupational aspirations for their children.[8] Usually it is assumed that farm residents have a somewhat limited view of occupational

opportunities and various work roles available in the contemporary urban society.[9] In the 1948 sample, almost 59 percent of the respondents resided on a farm. In 1967, only 31 percent of the 94 respondents continued to live on a farm (not necessarily the same farm).

The one-way analysis of variance resulted in an F-ratio of .14 (Table 1), indicating there was no significant relationship between parents' occupational aspirations for the eldest child and residence (farm-nonfarm), in this sample. This finding does not support earlier research findings of Kaldor, Haller, and Haller and Sewell[10] who found that there was a significant relationship between parents' residence and occupational aspirations for children.

A notable difference is that children in the Haller, Sewell, and Kaldor studies were interviewed to obtain data about family characteristics. We obtained data about the children from their parents.

The congruency of residence location between 1948 and 1967 is shown in Table 2. In this instance residence congruency refers to the same type of residence in 1948-1967, not 1948 aspirations for 1967 residence. The chi-square, computed on the basis of "high" and "low" aspirations categories and residence congruency was not significant; this supported the earlier conclusion reached in the analysis of variance test, but, again, did not agree with findings suggested by Haller, Sewell, and Kaldor.[11]

Migration Twenty-five percent of the parents continued to live in their home communities at the time of the 1967 interview. Therefore, 75 percent were classified as migrants. More females migrated than males. The data indicate that there was a significant relationship between parents' migration and their occupational aspirations for their eldest child. The

Table 1. Relationship between parents' residence and occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-ratio
Parents' occupational aspirations for eldest child	1	583,183.15	583,183.15	
Parents' residence	1	7.44	7.44	.14
Within	92	4,773.41	51.88	
Total	94	587,964.00		

N = 94

F = .14 - not significant at 5 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

F = 3.96 is required for significance at 5 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

Table 2. Residence congruency and parents' occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Parents' occupational aspiration score* for eldest child	Residence congruency: Congruent No.	%	Incongruent No.	%	Total No.	%
Number of parents indicating high occupational aspiration scores for their eldest child	46	82.1	30	78.9	76	80.9
Number of parents indicating low occupational aspiration scores for their eldest child	10	17.9	8	21.1	18	19.1
Total	56	100.0	38	100.0	94	100.0

X^2 = .014 - not significant at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

X^2 = 3.841 is required for significance at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

*Occupational aspirations were dichotomized at the mean score. Scores of 76 and above are in the "high" category, those 75 and below were scored "low". Range 58-93.

F-ratio of 11.46 shown in Table 3 indicated a highly significant relationship. Clearly, respondents who had migrated aspired to higher status occupations for their eldest child. There was no significant relationship found between migration congruency and parents' occupational aspirations for their oldest child. (Table 4) However, more than half of the respondents (58%) actually achieved their migration intentions. Hence, the expected positive relationship of parents' migration to occupational aspirations for their eldest child was substantiated, but it appears that whether or not the parents achieved their own migration intention was not related to the status ranking of the occupations aspired to for their eldest child.

Occupational Status Earlier studies indicated that there would be a significant relationship between a father's occupational status and his children's occupational attitudes and aspirations.[12] The occupational status of the parents (1967 study) was ranked on a modified North-Hatt scale. The same scale also was used to assign values to the occupations they wanted for their eldest child. Data presented in Table 5 indicate an F-ratio of 2.05, not significant at the .05 level. Failure to substantiate earlier research findings further indicates that parents uniformly aspire to high-status occupations for their children. This finding holds true across residence, occupation, and educational attainment. The notable exception in this study was for the migration variable. It appears that research showing that all parents aspire to higher occupational statuses for their children held true regardless of occupational status, residence, and educational attainment. The congruency test was not run on this variable because of the difficulty of judging whether individuals had achieved their occupational aspiration by 1967. Further, it was impossible to classify some general level occupational specifications from 1948 responses.

Table 3. Relationship between parents' migration performance and their occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-ratio
Parents' occupational aspirations for eldest child	1	583,183.15	583,183.15	
Parents' migration performance	1	529.65	529.65	11.46*
Within	92	4,251.20	46.21	
Total	94	587,964.00		

N = 94

F = 11.46 - significant at 1 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

F = 6.92 is required for significance at 1 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

Table 4. Migration congruency and parents' occupational aspirations for eldest child.

Parents' occupational score for eldest child	Migration congruency: Congruent No.	Congruent %	Incongruent-Undecided No.	Incongruent-Undecided %	Total No.	Total %
Number of parents indicating "high" occupational score for eldest child	45	81.8	31	79.5	76	80.9
Number of parents indicating "low" occupational score for eldest child	10	18.2	8	20.5	18	19.1
Total	55	100.0	39	100.0	94	100.0

X^2 = .0002 - not significant at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

X^2 = 3.841 is required for significance at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

Table 5. Relationship between parents' occupational status and their occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-ratio
Parents' occupational aspirations for eldest child	1	583,183.15	583,183.15	
Parents' occupational status	1	104.16	104.16	2.05
Within	92	4,676.69	50.83	
Total	94	587,964.00		

N = 94

F = 2.05 - not significant at 5 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

F = 3.96 is required for significance at 5 percent level with 1, 92 degrees of freedom.

Educational Attainment Results from earlier studies relating parents' educational attainment to occupational aspirations for their children did not provide conclusive results. Studies have indicated, at a general level, that parents with higher educational levels tend to aspire to higher occupations for their children.[13] The data presented in this study indicate that there was a highly significant relationship between parents' educational attainment and their occupational aspirations for their eldest child. The F-ratio (Table 6) of 9.325 indicates a highly significant relationship between these two variables and supports earlier research. Educational congruency is presented in Table 7. The resulting chi-square of 0.52 was not significant in this study, indicating that there was no significant difference between attainment of aspired educational level and occupational aspirations for their children. Most parents wanted high occupational status for their children.

Conclusions

The data presented in this paper indicate that most parents aspired to relatively high occupational aspirations for their children. This result does not substantiate significant relationships found in earlier research between parents' high occupational status and high occupational aspirations for their children. However, the sample is a relatively homogeneous sample with most of the parents coming from a small town-rural area even though many lived in a nonfarm residence at the time of the first interview in 1948. The major conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that, whatever classification of residence, migration, occupational status or educational attainment, the parents had uniformly high occupational aspirations for their children. The lack of significance in the three congruency

Table 6. Relationship between parents' educational attainment and their occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-ratio
Parents' occupational aspirations for eldest child	1	575,840.04	575,840.04	
Parents' educational attainment	1	439.49	439.49	9.325*
Within	91	4,288.47	47.13	
Total	93*	580,568.00		

N = 93 One respondent did not provide educational attainment information.

F = 9.325 - significant at 1 percent level with 1, 91 degrees of freedom.

F = 6.92 is required for significance at 1 percent level with 1, 91 degrees of freedom.

Table 7. Educational congruency and parents' occupational aspirations for their eldest child.

Parents' occupational aspiration score for eldest child	Educational congruency: Congruent No.	%	Incongruent-Undecided No.	%	Total No.	%
Number of parents indicating high occupational aspiration score for their eldest child	43	84.3	32	76.2	75	80.6
Number of parents indicating low occupational aspiration score for eldest child	8	15.7	10	23.8	18	19.4
Total	51	100.0	42	100.0	93	100.0

X^2 = .52 - not significant at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

X^2 = 3.841 is required for significance at 5 percent level with 1 degree of freedom.

measures indicates that parents' occupational aspirations for their children were not contingent on whether the parents achieved their own. Migration from the home community did produce a significant difference in occupational aspirations for children, with migrants aspiring to higher status occupations for their children, but there was no significant relationship in the congruency in this variable. This result conflicts with the lack of relationship between parents' 1967 residence and occupational aspirations for the eldest child. Hence, where the parents lived in 1967 was not related to the occupational aspirations for the children, but whether the parents had migrated was significantly related to these aspirations. This tends to coincide with the American ideal of mobility and the upward aspirations of "achievers" and those who are success oriented in the contemporary American society.

The results did not substantiate the expected difference in occupational status of the parents with higher occupational aspirations for their children. Earlier research indicated that there would be a significant relationship between parents in high status occupations and high occupational aspirations for their children. Again, these results probably differ with research findings in earlier studies more than any other significant relationship found in these data.

An anomaly in the data was the significant relationship of parents' educational attainment and occupational aspirations for their children. The expected significant relationship for educational congruency was not found. No significant relationship existed in parents' attainment of their own educational aspirations and their occupational aspirations for their children.

In summary, it appears that variables traditionally related to parents' occupational aspirations for children need be re-examined for direction and intensity of relationship. Variables suggested as strongly correlated with parents' high occupational aspirations for their children were not substantiated in this study. It may well be that the relative homogeneity of the sample was a contributing factor in these data. However, educational attainment and migration performance were substantiated and strongly supported in this set of data. The theoretical generalization that parents are among the strongest influence in socialization was not tested.

The longitudinal nature of the data allowed valuable comparisons. In general, the data showed that it was not important whether or not the parents had actually achieved their 1948 intentions; all parents tended to have high occupational aspirations for their children. This uniformly high aspiration level produced no significant differences due to parents' 1967 residence and occupational status. If all parents have high occupational aspirations for their children and successfully transfer this level of aspiration to their children, it appears that there will be some problem in future social structures. It is well known that all individuals cannot be at the top of a social structure. (Social stratification studies show almost as much downward as upward mobility.) Hence, findings such as these suggest a status role conflict if children internalize the values aspired for them by their parents and are unsuccessful in attaining these high occupational positions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]H. S. Parnes, Research on Labor Mobility (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1954). L. G. Reynolds and J. Shister, Job Horizons (New York: Harper, 1949).

[2]L. G. Burchinal, "What's Your Son Going To Do?" Iowa Farm Science, 14 (March 1960), pp. 16-18. Donald R. Kaldor, Eber Eldridge, Lee G. Burchinal, and I. W. Arthur, "What Careers For Farm Boys?" Iowa Farm Science, 17(August 1962), pp. 13-15.

[3]Parnes, Research on Labor Mobility. Reynolds, Job Horizons.

[4]Ward W. Bauder and Lee G. Burchinal, "Economic Success of Farm Migrants" Iowa Farm Science, 19 (October 1964), pp. 9-10. Burchinal, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

[5]Hubert M. Blalock, Jr., Social Statistics, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 242-253.

[6]Ward W. Bauder and Lee G. Burchinal, "Occupational Achievements of Rural-to-Urban Migrant Males in Comparison With the Urban Control Groups", Paper read at the American Sociological Association Meetings in St. Louis, September 2, 1961.

[7]Kaldor, op. cit., pp. 13-15.

[8]A. O. Haller, "Research Problems on the Occupational Achievement Levels of Farm-Reared People", Rural Sociology, 23 (December 1958), pp. 355-362. A. O. Haller and W. H. Sewell, "Farm Residence and Levels of Educational and Occupational Aspirations", American Journal of Sociology, 62 (January 1957), pp. 407-411.

[9]Burchinal, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

[10]Kaldor, op. cit., pp. 13-15. Haller, op. cit., pp. 355-362. Haller and Sewell, op. cit., pp. 407-411.

[11]Haller, op. cit., pp. 13-15. Haller and Sewell, op. cit., pp. 407-411. Kaldor, op. cit., pp. 13-15.

[12]The following studies are examples where father's occupation has been related to occupational aspirations. Ward W. Bauder and Lee G. Burchinal, "Do Rural People Succeed in the City?", Iowa Farm Science, 14 (September 1964), pp. 11-13. Alvin L. Bertrand, "School Attendance and Attainment: Function and Dysfunction of School and Family Social System", Social Forces, 40 (March 1962), pp. 228-233. Roy C. Buck and Bond L. Bible, Educational Attainment Among Pennsylvania Rural Youth (Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 686, 1961). James Cowhig, Jay Artis, J. Allan Beegle, and Harold Goldsmith, Orientations Toward Occupations and Residence (Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station Special Bulletin 428, 1960). W. H. Sewell, A. O. Haller, and M. A. Strauss, "Social Status and Educational and Occupational Aspirations", American Sociological Review, 22 (February 1957), pp. 67-73. William Dyer, "Parental Influence on the Job Attitudes of Children From Two Occupational Strata", Sociology and Social Research, 42 (January-February 1958), pp. 203-206. Eli Ginzberg, Sol W. Ginzburg, Sidney Alexrad, and John L. Herma, Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956). G. Jahoda, "Job Attitudes and Job Choice Among Secondary Modern School Leaders", Occupational Psychology, 26 (July 1952), pp. 125-130. R. Kroger and C. M. Loutit, "The Influence of Father's Occupation on the Vocational Choices of High School Boys", Journal of Applied Psychology, 19 (March-April 1935), pp. 202-212.

[13]These studies are examples of studies and theory relating parents' educational attainment to occupational aspirations for their children. T. Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory, Pure and Applied (New York: Free Press, 1949), pp. 233-250. E. K. Strong, Vocational Interests of Men and Women (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1943). Parnes, Research on Labor Mobility. Reynolds, Job Horizons. Sewell, op. cit., pp. 67-73.

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